

A Desire to be French

Clara Osowski, mezzo-soprano and Mark Bilyeu, piano

Early in the Morning

Ned Rorem (b. 1923)

« For the poet will never feel the song as he felt the poem which inspired the song. »

D'une Prison...

Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947)

The Sky Above the Roof

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

« To be French is witty and wit. »

Au Claire de la Lune

G.A. Grant-Schaefer, arr. (1872-1939)

Pierrot

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

Parisian Pierrot

Noel Coward (1899-1973)

Pierrot

Charles T. Griffes (1884-1920)

« To be French is to stress a sense of proportion. »

Beau Soir

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Flying at Night from *A Heartland Portrait*

Stephen Paulus (b. 1949)

« Poulenc's tribute »

Le Bestiaire

Francis Poulenc

Le Dromadaire

La Chevre du Thibet

La Sauterelle

Le Dauphin

L'Écrevisse

La Carpe

Belloc's Beasts

Paul Fetler (b. 1920)

The Polar Bear

The Lion

The Whale

The Hippopotamus

The Elephant

The Frog

entracte

« An American in Paris : Noël Lee »

Après le pas

Gérard Condé (b. 1947)

« Poetry isn't life, it's poetry, a distillation. »

A Charm of Lullabies
A Cradle Song
The Highland Balou
Sephestia's Lullaby
A Charm
The Nurse's Song

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

from *Folk Song Arrangements (French)*

Benjamin Britten, arr.

Voici le printemps
Fileuse
La belle est au jardin d'amour
Quand j'étais chez mon père

« Was he indeed so American ? »

La Bonne Cuisine : Four Recipes

Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)

Plum Pudding
Ox-Tails
Tavouk Gueunksis
Rabbit at Top Speed

« Back to Paris whose every ash-can is to me a diamond chalice. »

Young America has always looked to the influences of older Euporean cultures in the tradition of the Art Song. *Time Magazine* has called Ned Rorem « the world's best composer of art songs » and no wonder : his catalogue of over-600 songs compete in popularity only with his several books and diaries which chronicle his life, his views, and always his Parisian-American stream of consciousness.

Thus our muse for this recital: our American and English way of art song has taken style, subject, language, nuance, and environmental cues from the French. Composers, including Rorem himself, traveled to, and lived in France to study with the masters, view paintings of the greatest nationalistic style, and completely immerse themselves in a culture which intrigued and inspired them.

Rorem and other American composers such as Noel Coward, Leonard Bernstein, and most recently Stephen Paulus create the atmosphere of the French aesthetic in American music, and similarly, neighboring composers in England studied the language and assimilated French poetry into their own compositional styles and experiments.

Across languages and across cultures, the art song becomes a vehicle to access and find *the indispensable destination for all things French*, truly a source of collaboration for our time and partnership with the Alliance Française. We thank you for sharing your afternoon with us, and look forward to celebrating the language of music and poetry with you all again soon! Merci et bien des choses à tous!